

even a Martin Van Buren could adapt its ways to party loyalties, and a Cooper find in its past material for a couple of novels.

This is a book, then, not only to delight readers of up-state New York, but one meriting a wider circulation for its contribution to American history, and its example of one valid approach to the overall story.

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IN BRIEF

The great scholarly reprint boom marches on and it is encouraging to find ever more folklore "classics," such as Johannes C.H.R. Steenstrup's The Medieval Popular Ballad back in print (Translated by Edward G. Cox; Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1968; pp. 269+xxix, indices; \$7.95; paper \$2.95). A Foreword by David C. Fowler and an informative bibliographic essay by Karl-Iver Hildeman are new to this edition. The modern reader may find much in this volume, first published in 1891 and printed in English in 1914, manifestly outdated (as Fowler suggests, more moderately, in his Foreword). Such statements as (in regard to a stock line the author regards as a late addition to various songs, p. 80), "It must be hoped that in the future efforts will be made to extirpate this weed which has grown up in the garden of our popular ballads"; or (in regard to late changes in ballad music, p. 165), "It ought therefore to be the clear duty of musicians to restore, in any case, a portion of Scandinavian melodies to their former shape" are apt to grate harshly upon our current critical (or, rather uncritical?) sensibilities. Likewise, Steenstrup's dominant emphasis upon sorting out the genuinely medieval ballads from later ones may strike many of us as wasted scholarly energies. Fowler's point that modern research has too often disregarded actual chronology, a point he makes even more forcefully in his own A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, is well taken. But Steenstrup's chronologizing seems often based on tenuous premises. Also, his standards for determining the historicity of ballads, though they in some respects prefigure Vansina, are essentially naive. Yet the book remains, in its way, a sound introduction to aspects of Danish balladry, so important in relation to British materials, and is to be recommended. The simple cover design of this edition is remarkably striking. One peers over battlements into an empty violet (purple? magenta?) skyscape, half expecting proud Lady Margaret's ghost brother to ride up and riddle away in the surreal. One hopes to see other major ballad studies out in similar, relatively inexpensive paperback editions: Hustvedt's Ballad Books and Ballad Men and Friedman's The Ballad Revival for a start, perhaps followed by Gerould's The Ballad of Tradition (the paperback edition of which is apparently still out of print). Semi-affluent folklore students are waiting. ---F. de C.